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RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE 0643  
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH IMMEDIATE 9473  
RHMFISS/COMUSCENTAF SHAW AFB SC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
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RUEHBC/REO BASRAH IMMEDIATE 0013  
RUEHIHL/REO HILLAH IMMEDIATE 0013  
RUEHKUK/REO KIRKUK IMMEDIATE 0012  
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DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO S/I, NEA/ARP AND NEA/I; BAGHDAD  
FOR AMB CROCKER AND MNF-I CG GEN PETRAEUS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/2018

TAGS: [ASEC](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [MCAP](#) [MOPS](#) [PNAT](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI FM ON SUPPORT FOR IRAQ

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1007

[1](#)B. SECSTATE 35471

[1](#)C. SECSTATE 35473

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Michael Gfoeller for reasons 1.4  
(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S) The Ambassador delivered demarches on greater support for the current Government of Iraq (Reftel B) and for support against terrorism (Reftel C) to Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal on April 6. Saud was receptive to the request for greater support of the Nouri al-Maliki government, but did not commit further. He did comment on the recent Iraqi Army-led operation in Basra against the Jaysh al-Madhi (JAM) and the Special Groups. Saud characterized this operation as the "Shia Arabs" fighting the "Shia Iranians." He opined that if Basra fell to full Sadrist control, this would lead to "secession," which would spark an Iraqi civil war. The result would lead to not only increased violence within Iraq, but also draw Iraq's neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, into the fighting. Saud also described the purpose of Iranian President Ahmedinijad's recent visit to Iraq as "encouragement for his foot soldiers," implying JAM. Regarding the fight against terrorism, Saud responded that the SAG was doing all it could to counter terrorism at every level.

[1](#)2. (S) When we asked if the SAG would accept a visit by Ambassador Crocker and GEN Petraeus as they returned to Iraq after their Congressional testimony, Saud said they would be most welcome in the Kingdom and he would be eager to be briefed by them on the current situation in Iraq, most especially the recent operations in Basra. He added that King Abdullah would most likely meet with them, too.

[1](#)3. (S) COMMENT. The SAG has been distrustful of Maliki, often calling him an agent of Iran. Saud's remarks about the Maliki-directed Basra operation against JAM indicate he now sees the GOI, under Maliki, fighting against Iran, not working for it. While the Saudis have continually been

suspicious of the Shia-dominated GOI, they have made great strides against terrorism in Saudi Arabia itself. Moreover, the SAG for years has been preventing Saudis from directly traveling to Iraq for jihad, as shown by the fact that foreign fighters, including Saudis, enter Iraq through Syria, but not from Saudi Arabia. The SAG and the Saudi religious community openly speak out against all forms of jihad and terrorism. They have striven to cut off any private funding that supported terrorist operations in Iraq. The Saudis have implemented an effective rehabilitation program for Guantanamo returnees, including those who went to Iraq, to wean them away from violence and Islamic extremism, while also not alienating them, their families or their tribes.

14. (S) Post believes the upcoming visit by Amb Crocker and GEN Petraeus to the Kingdom can encourage the Saudis to be more supportive of our Iraq policy and open new avenues where the Saudis, and perhaps the GCC led by the Saudis, could effectively contribute to Iraq's stability and progress. END COMMENT.  
FRAKER